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ABSTRACT

A model of organizational analysis and renewal specifically designed for community colleges was developed to take into account internal functioning as well as the demands of external constituencies. The model is based on three elements: differentiation, referring both to the division of labor and the attitudes and subcultures that result from that division; integration, or the amount of cooperation needed to achieve unity of effort in working toward organizational goals; and assessment of the external environment. The model was applied to two community colleges: Columbia College, in California, and the West Campus of Pima County Community College District, in Arizona, to determine similarities and differences between organizational structures. Similarities found in the campuses' organizational structures included the following: the least amount of time was spent on long-term issues; there was a low level of certainty regarding external information; and there was a high level of certainty regarding internal information, but no consistency among unit leaders. Organizational structure differed in that the West Campus emphasized peer relationships in accomplishing tasks, while Columbia focused on the task and took the peer relationship for granted. The model was found to be useful in recognizing barriers to integration in an institution; adapting to the needs of the future; and placing an emphasis on the value of individuals, units, and the system itself in any institutional efforts. (TGI)

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YOUR ORGANIZATION: ANALYZE, IMPROVE, AND LEAD

PRESENTED AT:

LEADERSHIP 2000

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(7th, San Francisco, CA, July 23-26, 1995)

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ABSTRACT

A model of organizational analysis and renewal specifically designed for community college organizations is described. The model takes into account the internal functioning and behaviors as well as the influences and demands of external constituencies. The three interdependent elements of the model (differentiation, integration, and the environment) exist in a contingency relationship. It is the balance of these elements that produces an effective organization.

A basic assumption of the model is that a community college organization is a system and not a bureaucracy. A system is made of interdependent units that must cooperate to function properly. Like a living, biological system, there is a life cycle of organizations that requires attention to a process of renewal to guard against atrophy.

The analysis of two community college campuses will be compared according to the elements of the model. The leader of each major unit on each campus and the president completed a survey instrument and were interviewed about the campus organization. Similarities and differences will be addressed in the context of the differences in the organizational characteristics.

Strategies for change and renewal are described and implications for leadership, renewal, and the future of community colleges.

ORGANIZATIONS

We are all aware that organizations distribute people and carry out activities. They are a means of structuring the activities and people to accomplish the goals of the organization. Also, community college organizations are like icebergs. The majority of it is hidden under the surface.

The top of the iceberg includes things we can see such as goals, structure, financial resources, and the supply of human resources. Below the surface and out of sight are the behavioral aspects. These include the hidden attitudes, personalities, conflict, group processes, communication patterns, problem-solving styles, and other human factors.

The part that is exposed can look different from what is underneath in size, shape, and stability. Although icebergs appear like fortresses of strength and endurance, they are vulnerable to the turbulence of the environment and can fragment into pieces. Thus, what is below the surface is as important and complicated as what is visible.

There is one caution in using any model of organizational analysis. There are no easy answers to why organizations do or do not function smoothly. Analysis is a systematic way to understand the influences and interdependencies that exist and that are necessary for the appropriate outcomes to be achieved.

Organizational characteristics are crucial determinants of the behaviors of the people in an organization. People act and react according to where they are in the

shape of the organization. People have an influence on the organization as much as the organization has an influence on the people in it. Both are powerful forces. Both of these are important to consider in organizational analysis.

THE MODEL

The model looks at the whole organization from the top aerial view. It looks at the campus chief executive officer and the major divisions on the organizational chart. Usually in community colleges there is a unit responsible for direct instruction, student support, and institutional or administrative support, but there may be others.

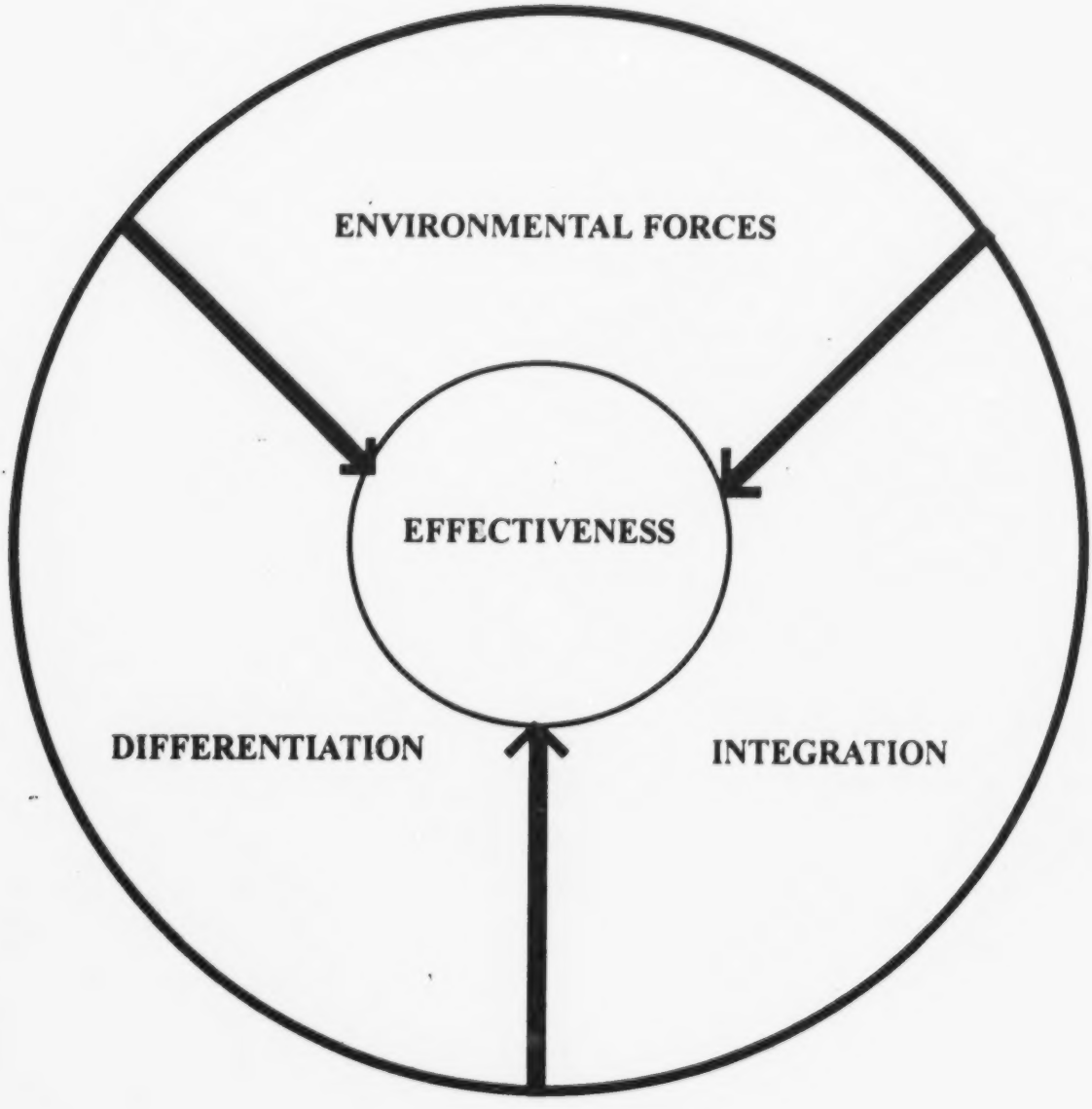
Leaders of each unit and the campus chief executive officer are interviewed and complete surveys about their organization, their role, and their perceptions. This information is analyzed based on the three model elements of differentiation, integration, and the environment external to the organization (See figure 1).

These three interrelated elements produce an effective organization. It is a balanced interrelationship that is necessary as a prerequisite for effectiveness efforts at any institution. The elements exist in a contingency relationship which is based on the belief that there is no one best way to organize.

There are many ways to organize a community college for it to be effective in its specific environment. There may be some organizations that are not functioning in the most effective manner. In those organizations, the fit between the internal processes and people may be out of balance with the demands and influences of external constituents.

Model of Analysis for Organizational Development and Renewal

Figure 1



DIFFERENTIATION

Differentiation is not just a division of labor but also the attitudes and subculture that results from that division. There is horizontal differentiation between and among units as well as vertical differentiation along hierarchical lines.

Below are listed some of the ways in which the three units were found to be different on the campuses studied.

* Perception of the importance of policies and procedures
* Perception of the importance of the organization's hierarchy
* Time orientation
* Goal orientation
* Perception of contribution to institutional effectiveness
* Perception of status
* Perception of cause of conflict between units

One example of the difference in time orientation exists in the business office thinking in a fiscal year as a unit of measurement, the instructional area thinking in an academic year as a unit of measurement, and student support thinking in registration cycles which starts in the middle of the other two. Thus, at any point one group may be on an up swing, down swing, or in the middle of routine kinds of responsibilities. That needs to be expected and kept in balance.

Differing attitudes and subcultures form as a natural evolutionary process. (The Cultures of Work Organizations 1993, Trice and Bayer)

Subcultures of different organizational units develop through the following means.

*Working together

*Departmentalization

*Shared experiences that develop a common history

*Cohesion because of similar goals

* Shared values

*Mutual successes and failures

*Line and staff distinctions

*Isolation from other groups

INTEGRATION

Integration is the amount of cooperation needed to achieve unity of effort in achieving the organization's goals.

There are specific formal vehicles for the integration of efforts of different units. Some of the ones commonly used on community college campuses include communication, shared goals, shared values, coordination of efforts, conflict management style, planning, and the hierarchy of the organization. There are also informal integration devices which can yield some of the same results. These

include co-location of individuals in close proximity, interpersonal networks, rotation of individuals through the organization, internships, and professional development.

There are three important things to remember about integrating people from different parts of the organization. First, it doesn't happen automatically. It is something that has to be attended to specifically. Secondly, the most effective organizations have the most elaborate set of integration devices. The level of differences of the units helps to dictate the level of integration that is needed. The more differences that exist between and among units, the more elaborate the set of integration devices that may be required. Finally, the best integration occurs in organizations which provide opportunities for units to interact to prevent isolation and prevent the development subcultures that are over powering to other units.

BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION

There were a variety of real or perceived barriers to the integration of the efforts of individual units. The leaders of each of the units easily identified a list of things that inhibited or prevented cooperative efforts. Some of these included:

* Different perspectives
* Different personalities
* Organizational structure and chart
* Perception of different status in the organization
* Insufficient communication

Two of the most salient barriers mentioned by leaders on the two campuses in this analysis were the organizational chart and lack of communication. The lines

and boxes on the organizational chart were seen as divisive and exclusionary rather than a representation of the path of accountability. Each leader mention a lack of communication as a barrier that could be eliminated. They all considered communication important. They all wanted to engage in more communication. However, because of other responsibilities and crises, it was something that could not be attended to as much as was desired by the individuals.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment refers to everything that surrounds and influences the organization. Community colleges respond to influences of the following elements identified by the leaders of the two campuses.

* Social issues
* Economic issues
* Students as consumers
* Student characteristics
* Other educational institutions
* Technology
* Accreditation
* State, national, and international issues

The influences form the external environment can change the structure, processes, personnel, priorities, and other organizational characteristics. My study of different campuses pointed out that the ability to respond is primarily based on

having clear, sufficient, and credible information about the environment to make decisions. Every campus I studied agreed this will become even more important in the future as influences become stronger.

EFFECTIVENESS

In this model, effectiveness is defined as the fit between the internal functioning and the demands of the external environment. The internal functioning is assessed through the elements of differentiation and integration and both of those are influenced by the demands and influences of external constituencies. Both internal and external are important to the concept of effectiveness.

ORGANIZATIONS AS SYSTEMS

In the past, planning and the organizations resulting therefrom appear as lifeless mechanical and mathematical models which seldom, if ever, fit reality. These models simply take an organization from one undesirable steady state of bureaucracy to a more desirable steady state of bureaucracy. These models are internally focused and often consider outside forces in total disregard.

Organic models and systemic approaches which are continuous, flexible, non-mathematical and ecologically aware offer a more realistic mechanism of looking at the future because they are based on interrelationships. In organizational terms systemic approaches can ensure the most efficient inter-relational effects

among and between units of an organization and the total organization with its internal and external environment.

In a presentation by Dr. Albert Lorenzo given at the Dean's Academy in Santa Fe, NM a few years ago, an organization was said to have a life cycle. This closely resembles the life cycle of a living organism. After considerable reflection, it was easy to recognize that modern organizations have very similar characteristics to living organisms and, in fact, one can recognize and describe systems at work in both which support this premise. Like an organism, the key to the total effectiveness of an organization is an understanding that a college is a comprehensive environment surrounded by all of the negatives and positives at work in and on society.

Organizations and organisms both have life cycles and development which are similar. The conditions for success are similar. Sound, dynamic, systems must work with some degree of congruence to assume a successful product. Also, systems, to work soundly, must possess and reflect sound organs/units. They need:

* Nourishment/nutrition
* Exercise/activity
* Conducive environment
* Stimuli
* Congruence/compatibility of function.

To effect positive change and renewal in an organization there is a need to objectively assess and analyze the internal processes that exist. Some the process to effect positive change include:

* Environmental scan
* Multidirectional communication
* Evaluation & measurement of efficiency
* Adjustment of organizational climate
* Cultural evolution
* Common values/goals
* Damage assessment and control
* Increased effectiveness
* Sound directions

It is also important to be aware of potential barriers to organizational renewal, change, and increased effectiveness. Some of the potential barriers include:

* Size of the organization
* Culture
* History
* Aging faculty and programs
* Unawareness of a systems perspective
* Committed to self but not the organization

*Narrow definition of community

*Disjointed concept of shared goals

*Values not clarified or agreed to

*Limited resources

*Enrollment decline

Following is a sketch of the systemic similarities between an organism and an organization.

COMPARISON OF TWO CAMPUSES

Columbia College is a comprehensive community college of 2,400 students in Sonora, CA which is 140 miles east of San Francisco in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The 280 acres house 15 buildings including student housing, 42 full-time faculty, 80 adjunct faculty, and three permanent administrators. Columbia is one of the two colleges in the Yosemite Community College District.

Columbia serves Tuolumne and Calaveras counties as not only an educational institution but a center for cultural, social, and athletic activity. The student body is 42% male and 58% female with 10% of those an ethnic minority.

The West Campus of Pima County Community College District is the largest, oldest and most comprehensive of a 5-campus, multi-campus district. The College service area encompasses a population of over 750,000 people. West Campus has an enrollment head count of 13,000 students with a full-time equivalent of some

5800. Of the 800 employees, 210 are full-time faculty, 485 are adjunct faculty, 11 are administrators with the remainder being classified staff.

The Campus physical plant includes 500,000 + square feet of instructional/ support space with educational specification being developed for a new 50,000 square feet Learning Resource Center. The West Campus offers over 84 certificate and degree programs, a comprehensive intercollegiate athletics program, and a broad based performing arts program. The Campus is located in the midst of 273 acres of the upper Sonoran Desert 60 miles north of the US-Mexico border and two miles from downtown Tucson, AZ.

The following similarities are important to consider in light of the difference in the characteristics of the campus. They are not isolated attitudes, nor are they based on the visible characteristics of the organization. They are really a reflection of what is a part of the hidden human behaviors and attitudes under the surface.

CAMPUS SIMILARITIES

1. The campus hierarchy and organization chart is not important.
2. The least amount of time was spent on long-term issues. Most leaders spent the most time with immediate problems.
3. All were task oriented. Support unit leaders and one president thought working conditions were important.
4. Most agreed conflict between units was caused by different perspectives.

5. Communication was adequate, could be improved, and extremely important. Informal relationship were hindered by lack of time.
6. Unit leaders did not substantiate the presidents' view of shared goals.
7. Very similar conflict management styles were used.
8. Various integrative devices were used. Presidents did not indicate there was a person in the role of integrator. The student support leader of each campus saw the president in this role and the most salient integrative device.
9. The level of certainty of external information was similar - not a high level.
10. The level of certainty of internal information was similar - high certainty but no consistency among unit leaders or congruency with the president.

11. The organization structure only minimally facilitated the necessary campus functions and was sometimes circumvented.
12. The organization structure will need to be changed in the future.
13. Both campuses were given middle-range scores for effectiveness for some similar reasons.

DIFFERENCES

1. Goal orientation. Goals on both campuses dealt with students or student success but Columbia's were broader in perspective to include other units. West Campus goals were more specific to that unit.

2. Peer orientation. West Campus was oriented toward maintaining relationships to accomplish a task. Columbia relationships were more of an assumption so the task became more important.
3. Perception of the contribution of individual units to organizational effectiveness.
4. Perception of the status of individual units in the organization.
5. Perspectives of the units as to which part of the mission it fulfills.
6. Coordination of efforts.
7. Number of perceived barriers to integration.
8. Elements of environment reflected the rural/urban settings.
9. Concept of shared governance and its relation to organizational structure is probably due to the difference in state intervention in shared governance.

Some of the more salient similarities include the perception that the campus hierarchy is not important, the organization structure only minimally facilitated the necessary campus functions, and it will need to be changed in the future. Community college organizations, if not considered bureaucracies, can be viewed as collegial, political, or systems organizations and would not find the hierarchy important. Instead, they can be viewed as miniature communities with the associated interrelated dynamics. This non-linear view attempts to explain why the hierarchy can get in the way. There is no single linear cause and effect relationship in a complex organization.

The least amount of time was spent on long-term issues while most leaders spent the most time with immediate problems. The primacy of short-term issues is salient to most organization participants because that is often the standard by which they are judged.

The finding that the presidents' goals were not shared by unit leaders is not unusual. It is similar to a centrifugal force that occurs in organizations. As activities and the motion occurs, the substance becomes more diffuse than what is at the center. There is a natural tug between which roles unit leaders will perform. There is a tension between responsibilities in district-level activities, state organizations, and in state regulation which yields external legitimacy and responsibilities for campus personnel issues, program development, and student issues which indicates internal legitimacy for unit leaders.

REORGANIZATION

After a college-wide restructuring of department chairs, reducing the number from 100 to 42, the West Campus president was charged with the task of reorganizing. Traditional mechanical models looking at numbers, were used attempting to achieve equitability, when equitability is impossible. Through observation, it was evident that any attempt to reorganize so close behind the department chair reorganization before a 'team' of believers was built would be deleterious both to the success of the Campus and to the reorganization.

On reviewing the results of an analysis of the culture and subcultures of the Campus completed as a part of the doctoral research of Dr. Barbara Ganz, the incongruities between perceptions of the president and other campus administrators became apparent. There was an awareness that if those "who are part of the team" exhibit misunderstanding or no understanding, faculty and classified staff perceptions will be even farther from the president's perception of the organization. This is an example of the centrifugal force that was previously discussed.

It was then apparent that what was attempted in a presidential reorganization plan for the campus was just that - the president's plan. It was bureaucratic, top-down, mechanical, mathematical, lifeless and could be likened to spraying herbicide in a vegetable garden.

Reorganizing without addressing fundamental issues is like rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. Restructuring should go beyond the movement of boxes on a chart to a basic renewal and rethinking of the processes and functions of the organization. The first issue to address in this is the complex nature of the organization. A system of interrelationships and interdependencies with no single linear cause and effect relationship is a challenge that needs to be viewed with great flexibility to allow internal development to respond to a changing environment.

The second issue to address is multiple subcultures and their differences. They each will be different because of responsibility and accountability. Also, the

part of the mission for which each is responsible fosters a different perspective by which the goals of the organization are viewed.

Shared goals or lack of shared goals need to be addressed through assessing the salience of the goals to each of the units. The diffusion of the meaning of the goals is seen as the goals trickle down form the president through the hierarchy.

Attention should be given to barriers that will potentially inhibit the integrated and cooperative efforts that are necessary for an effective organization. Integration does not happen automatically and is in opposition to the natural force of the development of differences in working groups.

It is also important to know if the campus chief executive officer (CEO) views him/herself as an integrator. This was found to be a significant issue for many of the leaders. The CEO must be more visible and more involved in providing the catalysts for change and the stimuli to shift the organizational paradigm.

The realities of the external environment need to be addressed. Social and economic conditions as well as political issues are salient influences on internal functions. The futuristic and multi-cultural aspects of the curriculum should be assessed. The changing demographics of the student body and community, the socio-economic level of the community, the desired use of technology, the available financial and human resources, and local workforce needs are all influences that affect internal structure, priorities, and functioning.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE MODEL

The implication for leadership inherent in this model focuses on a recognition of the need for fundamental, not incremental, change. Leadership is encouraged and developed at all levels to provide a strong infrastructure. The effectiveness of leadership is measured by the eradication of barriers, the buy-in to a systems approach by those desirous of team participation, open and honest multi-directional communication, and power distribution. The distribution of decision making, dissolution of barriers through empowerment, increasing the number of stake holders, and building trust are fundamentals to renewal and positive change.

This model assists administrators in not just recognizing the lack of balance of the elements of the model or recognizing the barriers to integration but encourages them not to passively accept that state as a part of the organizational culture. There is a call to action inherent in the use of an analytical tool by which an organization is measured. The model, as a tool of organizational development and renewal, helps them adapt to the needs of the future. A part of this is establishing a set of core values by which to operate.

Another aspect of organizational development is recognizing that change is constant and that change, like evolution in organisms, helps individuals cope with various pressures. Thus, it enhances success and increases effectiveness.

The analysis from this model can assist in the refocusing on the value of each individual, unit, and the system itself. As a prerequisite for any campus-wide institutional effectiveness efforts, teams must value each member equally. Thus, a

disparity of status or value of any member or any unit inhibits institutional effectiveness efforts and produces an ineffective team.

SUMMARY

1. Groups on your campus are going to be different because they respond to constituencies differently based on their responsibilities. The evolution of different subcultures is a natural process.
2. Special attention is needed to create integration. It is not a natural process.
3. The balance or lack of balance of the internal process and external demands can balkanize or galvanize your campus.
4. It is worth your time to analyze these things to keep a check on your effectiveness as the environment continually changes with time and the people and processes tend not to change.
5. Simply restructuring without addressing fundamental change and renewal of people, processes, and functions will be ineffective.
6. Leadership throughout the organizational system is important to maintain balance in light of changing environmental conditions.